

REMARKS

The final Office Action mailed April 11, 2007 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-25 are now pending in this application. Claims 1, 3-7, 9-12 and 25 stand rejected. Claims 2 and 8 have been canceled. Claims 13-24 have been withdrawn by the Examiner from further consideration.

The rejection of Claims 3, 4, 9, 10 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite is respectfully traversed.

Claims 3 and 4 have each been amended to depend from independent Claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 3 and 4, as amended, satisfy the requirements of Section 112.

Claims 9 and 10 have each been amended to depend from independent Claim 7. Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 9 and 10, as amended, satisfy the requirements of Section 112.

Claim 25 has been amended to recite “a reservoir cover comprising a plurality of tabs extending from said reservoir cover, said plurality of tabs engaging a top cover of the washing machine forming an opening to couple said reservoir cover to the top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said reservoir cover; ...” Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 25, as amended, satisfies the requirements of Section 112.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 112 rejection of Claims 3, 4, 9, 10 and 25 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 9 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,205,540 to Vona, Jr. et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Vona, Jr. ‘540”) is respectfully traversed.

Vona, Jr. '540 describes a washing machine (10) including an additive dispenser apparatus (60). The washing machine (10) includes a box-like metal cabinet (12) including a top panel (15), a water container (26), and a perforated-wall spin basket (28). The additive dispenser apparatus (60) is coupled to the cabinet (12) using threaded fastening members (not shown) and is positioned under the top panel (15). The dispenser apparatus includes a cup-shaped container (62) that has an interior space (70) for receiving an additive therein. A water inlet tube (114) is coupled in flow communication with the container (62) and a solenoid valve (115) is positioned therebetween. The inlet tube (114) and the solenoid valve (115) introduce water into the container (62). An outlet tube (110) is coupled in flow communication with the container (62) and includes a discharge opening (112) for discharging a flow directly into the water container (26). Notably, Vona, Jr. '540 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket.

Claim 1 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine, the washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, said additive dispensing system comprising "a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket; a conduit coupled to said reservoir and extending into said annular space, said conduit providing fluid communication between said reservoir and said annular space; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space through said conduit."

Claim 1 has been amended to include the recitations of original Claim 2, which has been canceled accordingly. Vona, Jr. '540 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system, as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Vona, Jr. '540 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and

extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket, as required by the Applicants' claimed invention. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. '540 describes an additive dispenser apparatus configured to discharge an additive through an outlet tube directly into a spin basket containing articles to be washed.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Vona, Jr. '540.

Claims 3 and 6 depend directly from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 3 and 6 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 3 and 6 likewise are patentable over Vona, Jr. '540.

Claim 7 recites a washing machine comprising "a tub for holding wash liquid; a basket for holding articles to be washed; and an additive dispensing system comprising a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket; a conduit coupled to said reservoir and extending into said annular space, said conduit providing fluid communication between said reservoir and said annular space; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute an additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space through said conduit."

Claim 7 has been amended to include the recitations of original Claim 8, which has been canceled accordingly. Vona, Jr. '540 does not describe or suggest a washing machine, as recited in Claim 7. More specifically, Vona, Jr. '540 does not describe or suggest a washing machine comprising an additive dispensing system including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket,

as required by the Applicants' claimed invention. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. '540 describes an additive dispenser apparatus configured to discharge additive through an outlet tube directly into a spin basket containing articles to be washed.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 7 is patentable over Vona, Jr. '540.

Claims 9 and 12 depend directly from independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 9 and 12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 9 and 12 likewise are patentable over Vona, Jr. '540.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 9 and 12 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,160,367 to Vona, Jr. et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Vona, Jr. '367") is respectfully traversed.

Vona, Jr. '367 describes a washing machine (10) including an additive dispenser apparatus (60). The washing machine (10) includes a box-like metal cabinet (12) including a top panel (15), a water container (26), and a perforated-wall spin basket (28). The additive dispenser apparatus (60) is coupled to the cabinet (12) using threaded fastening members (not shown) and is positioned under the top panel (15). The dispenser apparatus includes a pour-in container (62) that is coupled in flow communication to a storage container (70). The storage container (70) includes an outlet stem (120) to facilitate draining of the non-diluted contents of the storage container (70). Specifically, stem (120) is coupled to a liquid additive conduit (126) which is coupled in flow communication with the water container (26) via a drain sump (47). A solenoid (150) enables draining of the non-diluted contents of storage container (70) into conduit (126). Notably, Vona, Jr. '367 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted

additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket.

Claim 1 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine, the washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, said additive dispensing system comprising “a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket; a conduit coupled to said reservoir and extending into said annular space, said conduit providing fluid communication between said reservoir and said annular space; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space through said conduit.”

Vona, Jr. ‘367 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system, as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Vona, Jr. ‘367 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket, as required by the Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. ‘367 describes an additive dispenser apparatus configured to discharge non-diluted additive through a drain sump to a water container.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 1 to be patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘367.

Claims 3, 5 and 6 depend directly from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 3, 5 and 6 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 3, 5 and 6 likewise are patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘367.

Claim 7 recites a washing machine comprising “a tub for holding wash liquid; a basket for holding articles to be washed; and an additive dispensing system comprising a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket; a conduit coupled to said reservoir and extending into said annular space, said conduit providing fluid communication between said reservoir and said annular space; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute an additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space through said conduit.”

Vona, Jr. ‘367 does not describe or suggest a washing machine, as recited in Claim 7. More specifically, Vona, Jr. ‘367 does not describe or suggest a washing machine including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket, as required by the Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. ‘367 describes an additive dispenser apparatus configured to discharge non-diluted additive through a drain sump to a water container.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 7 to be patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘367.

Claims 9, 11 and 12 depend directly from independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 9, 11 and 12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 9, 11 and 12 likewise are patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘367.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11 and 12 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Reference No. 08-206390 to Morimasa et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Morimasa”) is respectfully traversed.

Morimasa describes an automatic washing machine that includes a tank (1) having a tub (2) and a rotation tub (4). The rotation tub (4) includes a basket (7) coupled therein. The washing machine also includes a top cover (18) and a control panel (21) coupled thereto. A detergent injection system is coupled to the top cover (18) such that the detergent injection system (22) is positioned directly above basket (7). The detergent injection system (22) includes an irrigation case (23) and a reservoir unit (26) coupled therein. The reservoir unit (26) includes a detergent reservoir container (43) and a finishing agent reservoir container (44). The finishing agent container (44) includes a siphon path formed by a pair of bodies (59 and 60), wherein the siphon path is coupled in flow communication with the rotation tub (4). A water source (not shown) is coupled to a feed valve (31) which is coupled in flow communication to the reservoir unit (26), wherein the valve (31) directs water to both the detergent container (43) and the finishing agent container (44) during the wash cycle. The water mixes with the finishing agent and is siphoned directly into the basket (7). Notably, Morimasa does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket.

Claim 1 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine, the washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, said additive dispensing system comprising “a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket; a conduit coupled to said reservoir and extending into said annular space, said conduit providing fluid communication between said reservoir and said annular space; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and

initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space through said conduit.”

Morimasa does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system, as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Morimasa does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket, as required by the Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Morimasa describes a detergent injection system positioned directly above a basket, where in the system is configured to discharge a diluted additive directly into the basket.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 1 to be patentable over Morimasa.

Claims 3-6 depend directly from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 3-6 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 3-6 likewise are patentable over Morimasa.

Claim 7 recites a washing machine comprising “a tub for holding wash liquid; a basket for holding articles to be washed; and an additive dispensing system comprising a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket; a conduit coupled to said reservoir and extending into said annular space, said conduit providing fluid communication between said reservoir and said annular space; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute an additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space through said conduit.”

Morimasa does not describe or suggest a washing machine, as recited in Claim 7. More specifically, Morimasa does not describe or suggest a washing machine comprising an additive dispensing system including a conduit coupled to a reservoir and extending into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket of a washing machine, wherein diluted additive is delivered to the annular space through the conduit such that the diluted additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket, as required by the Applicants' claimed invention. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Morimasa describes a detergent injection system positioned directly above a basket, where in the system is configured to discharge a diluted additive directly into the basket.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 7 to be patentable over Morimasa.

Claims 9-12 depend directly from independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 9-12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 9-12 likewise are patentable over Morimasa.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-12 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vona, Jr. '367, is respectfully traversed.

Vona, Jr. '367 is described above.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-25 is not a proper rejection. The Office Action combines a single prior art reference with mere assertions that "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Vona, Jr. ['367] to create an easily removable/installable detergent reservoir of the snap-fit type for easy cleaning." However, the Examiner does not provide a citation to some reference work recognized as standard in the pertinent art. As is well known, obviousness cannot be established by merely suggesting that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Vona, Jr. '367. Rather, each allegation of what

would have been an obvious matter of design choice must always be supported by citation to some reference work recognized as standard in the pertinent art, and the Applicants given an opportunity to challenge the correctness of the assertion or the repute of the cited reference. Applicants have not been provided with the citation to any reference supporting the mere assertions of obviousness made in the rejection.

Claim 25 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine, the washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, said additive dispensing system comprising “a reservoir cover comprising a plurality of tabs extending from said reservoir cover, said plurality of tabs engaging a top cover of the washing machine forming an opening to couple said reservoir cover to the top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said reservoir cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle.”

Vona, Jr. ‘367 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system, as recited in Claim 25. More specifically, Vona, Jr. ‘367 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system including a reservoir cover including a plurality of tabs extending from the reservoir cover, wherein the plurality of tabs engage with an opening defined in a top cover of a washing machine. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. ‘367 describes an additive dispenser apparatus coupled to a cabinet of a washing machine using a plurality of threaded fastening members.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 25 to be patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘367.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claim 25 be withdrawn.

Express Mail No.: EV 918280773 US

PATENT
9D-HL-25191

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


Eric T. Krischke
Eric T. Krischke
Registration No. 42,769
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070